

First United Methodist Church

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I am so glad I wasn't a priest back in the Old Testament days!! What makes me say that is that recently I read through the book of Leviticus. (Thanks again to the Youth for the Bible Reading Challenge! How's everyone doing with the Bible Reading Challenge?? Hopefully we're all sticking with it. Of course, you can always jump back in if you've stopped!)

Back to Leviticus. If you're familiar with this Old Testament book, you know that it gives the requirements and instructions for the various sacrifices that God required or expected from the people. Usually the sacrifice involved taking an animal (bull, ram, lamb, pigeon) to the Temple where the Priest would slaughter it (by cutting the throat). Blood would then be captured in a basin and sprinkled and splashed on different parts of the altar and sometimes even on the person involved. Certain organs were to be removed, along with the fat, and then often the animal was divided up and burned on the altar. The whole process sounds really messy and I don't even want to think about the smell from the blood being sprinkled around the altar area (and then aging there).

The sacrificial process was an important part of the Hebrew people learning to live in relationship with God, because it allowed the people understand that their actions have consequences, that their sinfulness and rebellion broke their relationship with God, and that repairing that broken relationship with God would cost them something. The Priests who did the slaughtering and the presenting of the offerings, had an important role in the process of restoring the relationship between God and people.

Yes, I'm glad I wasn't a priest in Old Testament days, simply because of the messiness factor. But I am incredibly grateful that Jesus, who in the New Testament is referred to as our High Priest, was willing to take on the Priestly role on my behalf. Now keep in mind that in the Old Testament the one who sinned had to provide the animal and thus, the blood. The amazing thing is that the blood that Jesus our High Priest sprinkled at the altar was his own. When it came to covering the cost of my rebellion and all of our sinfulness, it wasn't me (or any of us) that paid the price. It was God! Did you catch that!! Usually the one that broke the relationship or the one that violated the covenant was the one that had to pay the price. Yet in the case of the sinfulness of humanity, it was God that paid the price...with his Son! That is an incredible gift!!

Today is Good Friday. The only reason it is "good" is that someone else willingly covered the cost for my sinfulness and rebellion. Jesus didn't even ask if I wanted him to do this for me. He just did it, willingly on his own...out of his love me, for you, for all of us, for all of humanity. Today is a Good day for all of us because one person, Jesus the Son of God, chose to live (and die) in a spirit of "serving and loving."

Join us this evening (3.30.18) for our Good Friday service 7:00 pm in the sanctuary. This service is intended to help all who attend experience and understand that the "cost of sin" has been covered.

Serving Together,
Pastor Keith

Be sure to join us On Easter Sunday. **7:00 am Sunrise Service** led by our Youth. Following the Sunrise Service, the Youth will host an **Easter Brunch in the Fellowship Hall**. Our other **Easter Services will be held at 8:30 and 11:00 am**. Sunday School will not be held this Sunday.